

Ongoing Fighting in Sinai: Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Iran Wrongfully Blamed

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Headlines focus on Egypt. Sinai gets little attention. What's ongoing bears close watching.

On July 7, [Maan News](#) headlined "Egypt army 'preparing for Sinai operation,' " saying:

A "large-scale military operation" is planned. "Egyptian forces sealed more tunnels along Gaza's border."

"An Egyptian military official told Ma'an the army was preparing for a major operation in Sinai 'to clean it up from terrorist and criminal cells.' "

"The army official said 'coordination is ongoing between the Egyptians and the Israelis to bring military vehicles, troops and jets into Sinai to fight terror.' "

In late June, Egyptian forces "deployed heavily" along Gaza's border.

"Islamist militants" threatened reprisal for Morsi's ouster. On July 7, a Sinai pipeline south of el-Arish supplying Israel with gas was blown up.

Previous attacks occurred earlier. This was the first one in over a year. It followed days earlier clashes between unidentified militants and Egyptian forces. Hamas was wrongfully blamed.

According to an IDF statement:

"The Egyptian military activity in the Sinai is coordinated with Israeli security elements and authorized at the most senior levels in Israel, in order to contend with security threats in the Sinai that pose a threat to both Israel and Egypt."

At issue is inflicting more punishment on besieged Gazans. Rafah crossing is closed. Palestinians needing urgent medical care unavailable in Gaza can't get it.

Hundreds stranded in Cairo's International Airport and elsewhere outside Gaza can't return home.

According to [Max Blumenthal](#):

"Incitement against Palestinians peaked after the election of the Freedom and Justice Party's Mohamed Morsi as President."

Opposition politicians and supportive media figures "exploit(ed Morsi's) perceived alliance with Hamas to hold him responsible for acts of terror committed in the Sinai Peninsula."

Anti-Morsi elements wrongfully blame Palestinians. They call them Muslim Brotherhood militants.

Israeli media and Palestinian Authority officials hype the big lie. They do it for self-serving reasons.

Blumenthal quoted retired Egyptian general Sameh Seif Elyazal saying:

“Egyptian law will punish with sentences that could reach 25 years in jail the Palestinians and Syrians and Iraqis who have made calls for incitement to violence at the demonstrations at Rabaa Al-Adawiya in return for money.”

Egypt’s Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) massacred over 50 nonviolent protesters. They did so days earlier in Rabaa Al-Adawiya.

They wrongfully called them terrorists. They were praying peacefully outside Republican Guard headquarters.

SCAF officials circulated false stories. They claimed Hamas deployed scores of fighters in Sinai. They lied saying they want revenge for Morsi’s ouster.

Al Hayat is a London-based pro-Saudi broadsheet. It quoted an unnamed “senior Egyptian military official.” He lied about 150 Izz al-Din al-Qassam fighters allegedly entering Sinai through Gaza’s tunnels.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad were wrongfully blamed. Abbas advisor Yasser Abd Rabbo took full advantage. He accused Hamas of “helping terrorists and jihadist gangs in Sinai against the Egyptian army.”

Senior Fatah official Jamal Nazzal threw more fuel on the fire. He wants Hamas overthrown. He urged Palestinians to do it. So-called Fatah/Hamas reconciliation appears more illusory than real.

Legitimate elections are unlikely. Israel’s dirty hands manipulate events. So do Washington’s. SCAF’s a willing partner. Gaza remains isolated. Palestinian suffering continues.

No evidence whatever connects Hamas or Islamic Jihad to Sinai violence. Egypt’s coup d’etat regime issued a decree. It restricts anyone holding PA or Jordanian passports without a national number from entering Egypt.

Expect stepped up vilification of Hamas. On July 10, [Press TV](#) headlined “Gunmen attack military commander in Egypt’s Sinai,” saying:

According to a SCAF spokesman, militants attacked a senior commander and second field army chief. They “came under heavy fire, which led to clashes between security forces and the terrorist elements.”

“This is the latest in a string of attacks in Sinai targeting the army and the police in recent days with the aim of sowing chaos and harming the stability and national security of Egypt.”

The commander survived. Other attacks occurred earlier. Expect more to follow. Expect

Hamas to be wrongfully blamed.

On July 11, [Haaretz](#) headlined “Egyptian army killed dozens of Hamas fighters in Sinai, report says.”

It’s false. Saudi-controlled Al-Hayat propaganda called unidentified militants Hamas fighters. It said 32 were killed. Others were arrested.

Ismail Haniyeh refuted spurious charges. Hamas doesn’t interfere in internal Egyptian affairs. He said it numerous times before. No evidence suggests otherwise.

Egypt wrongfully accused Iran of “unacceptable interference” in its domestic affairs. On Monday, Tehran called Morsi’s ouster a “cause for concern.” It suggested “foreign hands” responsibility.

Iran knows Washington was very much involved. It’s no secret. Perhaps Israel’s dirty hands partnered in what happened. It has close ties to SCAF. Morsi tried improving ties with Tehran.

In 1979, they cooled after Egypt gave Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi shelter. It did so after his ouster. In February, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited Cairo. He was the first Iranian leader to come in decades.

Both countries are sharply divided on Syria. Iran strongly supports Assad. Morsi, SCAF, and new regime leaders back Washington’s war to oust him.

A Final Comment: Meet Ron Dermer

On July 9, Dermer was appointed Israel’s ambassador to Washington. He’ll replace Michael Oren. He’ll step down this fall. Reports suggest it’s not voluntary. He was removed. Dermer wants his job. He played hardball to get it.

He’s American born. He’s a Florida native. He’s returning to his roots. In 1995, he was economics minister at Israel’s Washington embassy. At the time, he gave up his US citizenship.

He’s ideologically over-the-top. He’s hardline. He’s militant. He’s pro-war. He’s bigoted. He’s dangerous. He reflects the worst of Zionist extremism. He defends the notion of making Israeli Arabs pledge allegiance to a “Jewish and democratic state.”

Foreign policy analyst MJ Rosenberg calls him “as crude as (Oren) is smooth.”

He opposes Palestinian self-determination. He supports occupation harshness. He believes “the principle of two states for two people is a childish solution to a complicated problem.”

According to [Reuters](#) and other reports, he has right-wing Republican ties. He’s linked to the neocon fringe. He supported Romney’s presidential candidacy.

An unnamed Israeli political analyst said he made sure Netanyahu stayed close to him. If elected, Dermer “would be the one you send right away,” he said.

“He’s got the right demeanor as a Republican. He has neo-conservative credentials. He has the full backing and confidence of the prime minister, which is important. But for Obama, it’s

not the right fit. There's too much baggage."

He's a close Netanyahu associate. For four years, he served as senior advisor and speechwriter. He was his key White House liaison.

In March, he stepped down. He had ambassadorial ideas in mind. He needed time to smooth the way. Israel's Channel 10 said he's been long groomed for the job.

[Tablet magazine](#) calls him "Bibi's brain." He's his "most influential aide." He's Netanyahu's "alter-ego."

He's "done more to shape Israel's relationship with the United States, its Arab neighbors, and the Palestinians over the past few years than any man aside from the prime minister himself."

He's a "jack-of-all-trades - strategist, pollster and speechwriter." He's "chief proxy in foreign affairs." He's a "constant presence in Netanyahu's meetings in Washington."

"Bibi doesn't move an inch without talking to him." He's Wharton/Oxford trained. He's got "Machiavellian political instincts." He's "ferociously competitive. He wouldn't let a three-year old beat him at ping pong."

Announcing his appointment, Netanyahu said:

He "has all the qualities necessary to successfully fill this important post."

"I have known him for many years, and I know that Ron will faithfully represent the State of Israel in the capital of our greatest ally - the USA."

"On behalf of the citizens of Israel, I wish him great success."

Dermer's appointment didn't surprise. In recent weeks, he spent time in Washington. He held numerous meetings. He made the rounds reassuring Obama officials he won't disappoint.

It remains to be seen. Pro-Israeli Washington Institute for Near East Policy analyst David Makovsky said tension regarding Dermer's Republican ties peaked last November.

Appointing him then wouldn't have been possible. Time soothes old wounds. Today's it's much easier.

He's "very influential with the prime minister. So this is also an opportunity under certain conditions."

He's Netanyahu's closest advisor. No one's closer. He has his complete confidence and trust. He has unfettered access. Host countries prefer these attributes.

Americans will know dealing with Dermer means they're doing so directly with Netanyahu. He's closer to him than anyone.

In America, Israel's lobby has final say. It approves. AIPAC endorsed him, saying:

"Mr. Dermer has a deep understanding of the critical value of the US-Israel relationship and

the importance of further strengthening the alliance between these two democratic allies.”

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